

own experiment. Hence, his data are rich and comprehensive.

His first study begins with the question of why the Japanese usually have their lost items returned to them. Part of the answer involves cultural expectations. But another part points to the law (rewards and punishments) and convenient lost and found institutions. Japanese law requires a finder of a lost item to return it to its owner or turn it in to a local police station and fill out a form. A recovering owner is legally obligated to give the finder a reward, usually about 10% of the value of the lost item. But, if no owner claims the item within six months and two weeks, the finder can retrieve it. Apparently, police in Japan take their lost and found duties seriously. They keep detailed records and provide safe storage for lost items. Police can devote significant amounts of time to these duties, because they are not distracted by high rates of crime.

Coincidentally, New York has a lost property statute somewhat similar to the one in Japan. According to New York law, a finder of property worth \$ 20 or more must turn it into the police. If the value of the item is less than \$ 100 and the owner fails to claim it within three months, it can become the finder's property. The existence of the New York statute enabled West to conduct an experiment that controlled for law, but not for culture. He chose three locations for his experiment: a mixed shopping-business district in New York (midtown Manhattan), a similar district in Tokyo (Shinjuku), and the front of a New York grocery store that caters almost exclusively to a Japanese expatriate clientele. In each location he dropped one hundred mobile phones and twenty wallets, each containing an owner's identification card and either \$ 20 (New York) or 2,000 Yen (Tokyo). Given the similarity in the New York and Japanese lost property laws, a significant difference in return rates could be attributed to cultural norms. In fact, the highest return rates occurred in Tokyo (95 phones and 17 wallets with cash), and the lowest in Manhattan (77 phones and 6 wallets with cash). The third site's return rate fell in-between. The differences were statistically significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level. One can conclude from this experiment that culture matters.

The remaining chapters are equally insightful and detailed. West investigates the hidden and traditional organization of sumo wrestling, and the popular spread of karaoke music, and the various ways (formal and informal) that citizens and karaoke establishment owners resolve noise pollution disputes. Next, he examines the nature of neighborly relations in Japanese condominiums. Owing to insufficient maintenance, such buildings tend to have a life of little more than thirty years. Then unit owners must agree either to rebuild or make major renovations. West examines the roles that social relations, demography (especially unit owners' ages), economics, and condominium law play in making this decision so difficult to reach.

West's chapter on love hotels is especially intriguing. He estimates that about half of all sex in Japan occurs in these establishments. Many married couples and young

lovers resort to love hotels to enjoy the privacy that is unavailable in their small, crowded apartments. Once regarded as seedy and shameful places, the 1985 Entertainment Law gave these hotels legitimacy and apparently destigmatized them. The law encouraged operators to upgrade their hotels, making them more appealing to a more diversified clientele. Over a three-year period West made "unaccompanied" visits to fifty hotels in various parts of Japan. Although he did not engage in anthropological "participant" observation, he did observe and conduct interviews with seventy-one persons at seventeen hotels. West describes the history of love hotels, their locations, architecture, decor, marketing strategies, clientele, rates (about \$ 50 for two hours), and regulatory laws.

In the two remaining chapters, West addresses the questions of why Japanese work such long hours and why so many people in debt commit suicide. In each of these cases, he shows how historical fluctuations in work and suicide rates can be explained by the interplay of legal changes, economic trends, and traditional norms.

In conclusion, this book contains an extremely well researched and presented series of case studies. It is highly recommended for legal anthropologists and essential reading for those in Japanese studies.

Paul J. Magnarella

**Zaman, Shahaduz:** Broken Limbs, Broken Lives. Ethnography of a Hospital Ward in Bangladesh. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2005. 250 pp. ISBN 90-5589-229-7. Price: € 35.00

In his striking ethnography of the orthopedic ward of a government-run teaching hospital in Bangladesh, Shahaduz Zaman lays out three goals for his study: to "give a thick description of the life" in this ward; to describe how facets of broader Bangladeshi society come to be expressed in hospital life – that is, how the hospital is a mirror of Bangladeshi society; and to illuminate the cultural and structural problems such hospitals in Bangladesh face. He succeeds notably in the first and third tasks, but somewhat less at connecting features of Bangladeshi society to the microcosm of the hospital.

Zaman draws vivid pictures of life in this orthopedic ward. A native of Bangladesh, trained there as a doctor and taking his anthropology degree in Amsterdam some years later, Zaman returns to Bangladesh to create this ethnography. While his research goals are clearly defined, he gives less detail as to his methods of data collection. He does, however, seem keenly aware of any possible biases on his part, and of the potential difficulties in conducting his research, being a formally trained Bangladeshi medical doctor on the one hand, yet striving to be an objective anthropological observer on the other.

Zaman guides the reader through his portraits of Bangladesh's history and of the hospital itself, and then devotes chapters to each of the pertinent actors in the hospital ward: patients, relatives, lower-level staff, nurses, and doctors. He effectively illustrates the roles of the players both as individuals and as part of the malfunctioning machine that is the orthopedic ward. For example,

in his chapter titled “Nurses: Ladies without Lamps,” he discusses the frustration these women feel, often scorned or looked down upon by many in the community for their choice of profession. Many women are forced by financial necessity to find a job, and nursing both pays well and does not require higher education. However, the social image of nursing in Bangladesh carries some taint. People believe nursing to be an immoral profession, or that the work they do is dirty, so women who are nurses are associated with the lower castes. When working in the orthopedic ward, nurses face other problems. Overwhelmed by paperwork, nurses do very little to no actual nursing, the work for which they are trained. In addition, their relationships with various others in the ward are strained in different ways: they feel unacknowledged by doctors, and are often scolded by them in front of patients, families, and ward boys; they are often blamed when equipment or supplies go missing; they are the ones forced to deal with the patients and their relatives, who are too afraid to ask the doctors questions.

After introducing all those involved with life in the ward, Zaman moves to his analysis of the hospital as mirror of society. His thesis is “that the hospital is not an isolated subculture or an ‘island,’ rather it is a microcosm of the larger society in which it is situated” (18), shaped by various social, cultural, economic, and historical features of Bangladesh. This may seem obvious, but it is always good to see this truism of anthropology reiterated and reinforced with compelling examples like this. Zaman outlines the way the ward reflects the general poverty of Bangladesh; how the lives of the patients in the ward reflect the crucial role of family in Bangladesh; how the injuries inflicted upon patients as a result of physical brutality indicate the general level of intolerance and violence in society; the way the hierarchies and gender rules in the hospital follow those of the culture. He does all this very well, but I would have liked him to take his analysis even further. For instance, do the spatial (not only geographical) and temporal divisions and dynamics of the ward or hospital reflect larger social realities? Or, the problem of the latrines seems to be quite important to patients – is this symbolic of a deeper issue in society?

Some of the connections made between the hospital ward and Bangladeshi society are unclear. As one case in point, Zaman discusses what he calls dwindling public morality in the behavior of hospital staff and of those in society. He describes tactics used by hospital workers, such as doctors leaving work early to tend to their more lucrative private practices, or bribes transacted throughout the hospital, as evidence of this dwindling morality. But he then goes on to chronicle how those in the ward find inventive ways to adjust and cope with life, giving as some examples the way that doctors extract money from rich clients and maintain dual jobs to cope with their low government incomes. So is it dwindling morality, or are people just trying to survive?

Finally, the book is poorly edited. One cannot fault Zaman for this. Who among us, writing in a language other than our native tongue, is not vulnerable to making errors? Fixing that is the job of the press that publishes

the book and clearly, the publisher did not do its job. The mistakes are many and distracting: misused apostrophes, spelling errors, in-text citations that do not match the bibliography, to name some. This is a disservice to Zaman’s accomplishment. He tells a good story, and makes a valuable contribution to the body of work of hospital ethnographies, especially those of non-Western institutions. He gives us a glimpse into a part of real life in Bangladesh, and it is clear that he cares deeply for both his research and for his country. By the end of the book, I feel I know as much about Zaman as I do about the hospital ward, and this is a treat.

Stacey Giroux Wells

**Zeitlyn, David:** *Words and Processes in Mambila Kinship. The Theoretical Importance of the Complexity of Everyday Life.* Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005. 243 pp. ISBN 0-7391-0801-8. Price: \$ 80.00

Comme l’indique son sous-titre, l’auteur entend porter dans cet essai certaines facettes de “la vie quotidienne” dans la société des Mambila du Cameroun (village de Somié) ou encore, comme il l’écrira à la fin de ce volume (207), de “la vie-comme-elle-est-vécue” (life-as-it-is-lived).

C’est par une analyse ethnolinguistique de ce supplément d’âme que fourni, à un quotidien autrement monotone, la “conversation ordinaire”, et plus particulièrement les usages qui sont fait des termes référentiels – du vocabulaire de la parenté, des pronoms et des noms propres – que Zeitlyn s’efforce, un peu à la manière de Janet Carsten (1997) dans son essai sur les processus à l’œuvre dans les usages pratiques de la parenté (the process of kinship), de s’approprier ce thème.

L’auteur entend démontrer ainsi que les termes ou les expressions employés dans ce cadre microsociologique de la conversation, accordent une importance majeure aux rôles et statuts sociaux à la fois du locuteur et de la personne à laquelle il s’adresse, mais également de ceux dont l’on parle, qu’ils soient ou non présent au moment où l’on en parle. L’usage de telle ou telle expression s’inscrit dès lors dans un processus de négociation permanente des rapports des acteurs plutôt qu’il n’est déterminé par un cadre figé, celui d’une nomenclature de parenté particulière en l’occurrence.

L’ouvrage comporte deux parties. La première, après un survol des prémices théoriques de l’auteur (qui comprend notamment, au chapitre 2, une critique, fort juste au demeurant, de l’approche déconstructionniste de Schneider), décrit divers exemples de la manière dont les gens utilisent les termes de parenté dans des contextes du quotidien. Dans la seconde partie de ce volume, Zeitlyn proposera une analyse ethnolinguistique (sans doute plus linguistique, en définitive, qu’ethnologique) de ces mêmes usages.

Les deux premiers chapitres discutent ainsi de nouvelles manières de traiter des faits de parenté mambila, même si l’expression ne désigne ici que la seule terminologie de parenté. L’auteur rapporte en particulier la manière dont les Mambila parlent à la fois *de* leurs proches